INSIDE: SPECIAL SECTION HONORING THE WCC CLASS OF 2025!

Washtenaw Community College

ON THE RECORD

ontherecord.wccnet.edu /WashtenawCC @WashtenawCC @WashtenawCC AUGUST 2025

INSIDE

MASQUERADE MAGIC

Itching to put on some fancy clothes, enjoy a great meal and do a little dancing? What if you could raise funds for WCC students in need at the same time? **PAGE 7**

DINO SOAR

The life-size replica of a prehistoric pteranodon with a 20-foot wingspan hanging out on campus is the result of some creative thinking and a little cross-department collaboration. **PAGE 8**

THE CHAMPS

WCC recognized members of its two national championship-winning Esports teams at its July Board of Trustees meeting. **PAGE 8**

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SUMMER SPARK

PHOTO BY JD SCOTT

A member of the Ironworkers International trade union fine-tunes her skills in one of Washtenaw Community College's welding labs. Approximately 700 Ironworkers were on campus July 12-18 for their annual Instructor Training Program.

Union training adds $23 million to Washtenaw County economy

By FRAN LeFORT
Director of Media Relations

Ann Arbor becomes a national hub of skilled trades excellence every summer as approximately 6,000 union members from across the United States and abroad converge to enhance their expertise.

Nearly 5,000 will train at Washtenaw Community College.

This influx of trades professionals brings not only advanced training to the region, but also contributes a $23 million boost to the local economy.

Plasterers and cement masons; roofers; ironworkers; electrical workers; and plumbers and pipefitters are training with their respective trade organizations at WCC from June through August.

The "Train the Trainer" partnerships are multi-year programs with union trainers working to enhance their skills and safety practices before going back to teach fellow trades workers in their organizations.

A new report from Destination Ann Arbor revealed that three of the major unions impacted the local businesses, restaurants and economies of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County by $23 million last summer.

Union members and their families account for a combined 21,000 nights in local hotel rooms and spent nearly $18 million during their stay.

This year's summer of training kicked off with approximately 120 members of the Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association on campus.

The United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers & Allied Workers brought approximately 200 members for training June 23-27.

More than 700 members of the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers Union followed.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - National Electrical Contractors Association brought approximately 2,000 members to the Ann Arbor area July 23-August 1. The electrical workers split training between WCC and nearby Eastern Michigan University, with about 1,000 concentrated at WCC.

The summer of training concludes the week of August 9-15 with up to 3,000 members of the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada (UA). Destination Ann Arbor will host a block party in downtown Ann Arbor on August 11 for the United Association.

Union trainers typically spend a week on campus enrolled in hands-on instruction to stay ahead of the curve in cutting-edge skills and technological developments within their industries. Some also return at various times throughout the year for specific training. ●

Join us for Fall classes beginning August 25

Registration open, free application available online, staff ready to help

We may still be in the dog days of summer now, but Fall semester at Washtenaw Community College is close at hand.

Registration is ongoing for Fall 2025 with on-campus, online and mixed mode classes starting on Monday, August 25.

Additional sessions begin on September 17 (Session II), October 1 (Session III) and October 18 (Session IV).

Classes with later starting dates cover the same material at an accelerated pace, ideal for working adults with family and job responsibilities.

Visit wccnet.edu/enroll to complete a free application, schedule an in-person or virtual campus visit, review areas of study, enroll and register for classes.

Need help? Attend Xpress Registration in-person or virtually and our dedicated staff will walk you through any part of the enrollment process for the upcoming semester. Visit wccnet.edu/xpress for details.

WCC offers more than 140 university transfer and career education associate degree and certificate programs, 50 of which can be completed entirely online.

At $99 per in-district student credit, WCC's tuition is one of the lowest in the state. Students who attend WCC save up to $20,000 per academic year compared to four-year public and private institutions in Michigan.

Plus, WCC offers affordable payment options, including weekly and monthly payment plans. A number of financial aid and scholarship opportunities are also available.

Call 734-973-3543 or email info@wccnet.edu for more information. ●

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WCC programs are affordable, flexible and nationally recognized!

ENROLL FOR **FALL '25** SEMESTER TODAY!

wccnet.edu/enroll

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Washtenaw Community College strives to make a positive difference in people's lives through accessible and excellent educational programs and services.

On the Record is written and designed by the WCC Marketing and Communications Department, Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-4800.

Questions about the WCC programs and services described in this publication should be directed to the Office of Admissions at 734-973-3543.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

'Weekend Welders' helps working adults train for high-demand, high-wage careers

Washtenaw Community College is responding to industry demand by expanding its welding and fabrication training with a new "Weekend Welders" program beginning in the Fall 2025 semester. Fall classes begin August 25.

Designed for working adults, the program provides a flexible, career-focused path to high-demand welding jobs without disrupting weekday responsibilities. Students have the opportunity to earn two certificates and an associate degree while only attending classes on Sundays.

The cohort-based format allows students to progress together, providing support and continuity.

The college is home to one of the largest welding training labs in the state, with 72 booths, and enrolls more than 400 welding students each semester.

Eva Samulski, Dean of Career and Technical Education at WCC, calls the program "a game-changer" for those who want to reskill, upskill or forge a new career path.

"We're working to serve those who want to learn this skill but can't commit to a traditional Monday-through-Friday, full-time program," Samulski said. "To meet the needs of today's learners, we must offer flexible opportunities that align with their lifestyles."

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 45,000 welding jobs are projected to open each year through 2033 with a median pay of $51,000 per year, and higher depending on the job.

The new format paves the way for some students to enter the field in entry-level welding jobs as early as Fall 2026, earning stackable certificates along the way and gaining in-demand skills while still maintaining their weekday commitments.

For more information, visit wccnet.edu/weekend-welders.

Radiography receives maximum accreditation

The WCC Radiography program has maintained its maximum eight-year accreditation from the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT).

Achieving the longest accreditation cycle offered by JRCERT signals the WCC program has met or exceeded all national standards for educational quality, has demonstrated strong outcomes and has shown institutional stability and continuous improvement.

PHOTO BY JD SCOTT

A youngster plays with slime during the WCC Science Night at the Ann Arbor Summer Festival.

Science Night at Summer Festival

WCC hosted a Science Night at the Ann Arbor Summer Festival with free, hands-on STEM activities.

Activities blended STEM, sports and esports, offering hands-on experiences that sparked curiosity, ignited creativity and inspired kids of all ages to explore exciting careers.

Young scientists dove into chemistry, physics and engineering through interactive experiments led by WCC's Math, Science & Engineering Technologies faculty members.

Other activities included DIY semiconductor kits; live science demos with edible DNA & slime; open-field sports (led by WCC Sports staff); video gaming in the esports zone (led by WCC Esports staff); and themed coloring pages featuring WCC's mascot, Alpha.

WCC Esports wins two national titles

In its first year of eligibility, the WCC Esports program won a pair of National Esports Collegiate Conference (NECC) postseason competitions. Both the WCC Counter Srike 2 team and its Overwatch 2 team won their 16-team, single-elimination tournaments.

"The program has built up so fast and we have so much energy around the program right now," said WCC Esports Coordinator Max Kuznia. "Students are really having a great time and enjoying the team aspect. And the school is super supportive of what we've been able to accomplish."

The WCC Counter Strike 2 team beat Southern Illinois University for the Division 3 national title while the WCC Overwatch 2 team topped Coe College for a Division 5 championship.

WTMC students place in national contest

Four Washtenaw Technical Middle College students – all dual-enrolled at Washtenaw Community College – finished in third place in the Social Innovation Challenge at the Future Bound Junior Achievement National Finals in Atlanta last month.

Norman Martin, Roman Karas, Quinn Lowen and Justus Hibbler created an app called Atletassist, designed to improve communication between injured athletes, coaches and medical staff. ●

This is an excerpt of a longer story available at wccnet.edu/news.

THE GALLERY

PHOTO BY JD SCOTT

'STRENGTH & GRIT' EXHIBIT

Washtenaw Community College student Jonathan Waidelich, above, stands alongside his charcoal and pastel drawing, "Muscle Strengthens Muscle," during the opening reception for the "Strength & Grit: Celebrating the Working Class" exhibit currently displayed at The Gallery in the Morris Lawrence Building on the WCC campus.

The exhibit is available for free viewing by the public through September 10. The Gallery is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays.

Waidelich is among 19 artists from around Michigan who are showcasing more than 30 pieces of work at the exhibit. Other artists include three WCC instructors and several others from the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area. ●

For information about upcoming exhibits at The Gallery, visit washtenaw.cc/thegallery.

Washtenaw Community College CAMPUS CALENDAR

CAMPUS EVENTS

XPRESS REGISTRATION

8/16 Work through any part of the enrollment process for the upcoming semester with guided assistance from our Student Welcome Center staff at Xpress Registration, scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, August 16. You can attend in person or virtually. Visit wccnet.edu/xpress for more details and registration.

FIRST DAY OF FALL SEMESTER

8/25 The Fall semester at WCC begins Monday, Aug. 25. Later-starting sessions begin Sept. 17 (Session II), Oct. 1 (Session III) and Oct. 18 (Session IV). Learn more at wccnet.edu/enroll.

CORPORATE TRAINING & LIFELONG LEARNING

Check out these non-credit classes and more, delivered live online, at wccnet.edu/noncredit.

MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP
Becoming a First-Time Manager

Begin this self-paced class whenever you'd like and access all the resources at your convenience. It provides a new, friendly approach for those charged with the task of management. Take on the challenges of supervision and learn lessons to increase productivity, unlock hidden talent, communicate effectively and diagnose problems.

Self-paced
Location: Webinar
Cost: $195

COMPUTING AT HOME
Digital Couponing Basics

8/16 Missing out on digital saving deals because you are afraid or never knew how to use the ever-changing computer-based technology? If so, this online class is for you. Learn to take advantage of great online deals while being safe. Discover how to score rewards in-store and online for items you need and get the best prices.

Tuesdays & Thursdays, August 12-21
Location: Webinar
Cost: $135

FOOD & DRINK
Japanese Cooking: Onigiri Rice Ball

8/18 Japanese homemakers create tasty rice balls, or onigiri, filled with seafood or pickled vegetables, and wrapped in sheets of nori seaweed or seasoned with sesame seeds, etc. for packed lunches or picnics. In this class, learn step-by-step how to create healthy and delicious onigiri, using a variety of ingredients. Gluten-free, vegetarian, and vegan options available.

Monday, August 18
Location: St. Luke Lutheran Church
Cost: $45, + $30 mandatory fee

Washtenaw Community College

ONWARD AND UPWARD

CLASS OF 2025 BY THE NUMBERS

Washtenaw Community College

2,430
Total graduates earning an associate degree and/or certificate

1,562
Associate degrees earned

1,785
Certificates earned

28.6
Average age of graduates

54.7%
Graduates who are women

33.3%
Graduates from minority ethnic groups

65.1%
Graduates who received some form of financial aid

Honors

Among the Class of 2025 students who earned associate degrees:

389
Graduated with High Honors
(3.8 or higher GPA)

330
Graduated with Honors
(3.5 to 3.79 GPA)

Most Popular Programs

ASSOCIATE DEGREES	
General Studies	264
Liberal Arts Transfer	127
Registered Nursing	119
Business Administration Transfer	118
General Studies-Math & Natural Sciences	80

CERTIFICATES	
Nursing Assistant Skills	59
Core Business Skills	50
Welding & Fabrication Principles	42
Health Care Foundations	38
Supply Chain Essentials	37

WCC's 57th Commencement

Much has changed since WCC's first Commencement ceremony in 1968 *(see program cover at left)*, when 47 students received associate degrees. Notably, the distinction of WCC's first graduates belongs to the 12 students who completed a one-year program in inhalation therapy in 1967.

More Online

Watch a full replay of the 2025 Commencement ceremony at youtube.com/washtenawcc and find multiple photo galleries at flickr.com/washtenawcc.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

At WCC, we meet students where they are; lead them where they want to go

By DR. ROSE B. BELLANCA
WCC President

What do you call someone who attended WCC? Employed.

That's our promise at Washtenaw Community College, one that we work hard to fulfill every single day.

Each year at our Commencement ceremony, I have the immense honor of watching that promise come to life in the smiles, tears, and triumphant strides of our graduates.

The ceremony is more than a celebration of academic success. It's a celebration of transformation. It's a moment to recognize the incredible range of students who walk through the open doors of WCC and follow the personalized paths we help pave for them.

The Class of 2025 includes more than 2,400 unique graduates who earned around 3,200 degrees and certificates.

About 700 of them attended the Commencement ceremony and crossed the stage to receive their awards.

Behind each of those diplomas is a story. There's the high school student who dual-enrolled to get a head start, the first-generation college student chasing opportunity, the financially prudent student starting pursuit of advanced degrees at our affordable tuition rates, the adult learner looking to pivot careers, and the retiree finding joy in lifelong learning.

Some of our students are balancing work, parenting, or caregiving responsibilities while attending classes online, in-person or both.

All of them arrive with different circumstances – and all of them leave with something in common: a new direction and the skills to move forward.

Washtenaw Community College doesn't believe in a one-size-fits-all approach to education.

We meet students where they are – whether that's in a high school classroom, in the middle of a career change, or at the beginning of a brand-new chapter. And we help guide them toward where they want to go – often into new careers, better jobs, or advanced education opportunities.

That mission is exemplified not only in our graduates, but also in community champions like Tom Butman, who received this year's Honorary Associate Degree in Community Service.

Tom Butman is the general manager of Gene Butman Ford in Ypsilanti, where 10 WCC graduates now work in full-time roles, and where students continue to gain real-world experience through apprenticeships and part-time jobs.

After earning a bachelor's degree, Butman enrolled in the Transportation Technologies program at WCC to strengthen his own knowledge of his family's industry – a powerful testament to the value of lifelong, career-driven learning.

Our 2025 graduates have persevered, grown, and achieved something remarkable.

Whether they came to WCC to start a journey, continue it, or completely reinvent it, their stories add to the fabric of who we are – and, more importantly, who we serve.

So, again: What do you call someone who attended WCC? Employed.

And Engaged. And Empowered. And Equipped. And Elevated. ●

Washtenaw
Community College

GRADUATE PROFILES

STORIES: RICH REZLER | PHOTOS: JD SCOTT

AIDEN LENHARDT | TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES, MEN'S SOCCER CAPTAIN

Sometimes it can be tough to leave WCC when there's so much to do and so many different things to learn. Just ask Aiden Lenhardt.

The long-time captain of the WCC Sports club men's soccer team, Lenhardt is a high honors graduate (3.86 GPA) in the Class of 2025, earning a Transportation Technologies associate degree and an Advanced Automotive Services Technician certificate.

But that's just the latest round of checkmarks on his WCC to-do list.

The 2021 Gabriel Richard High School graduate had already earned a General Education associate degree in 2023 and transferred to Eastern Michigan University to pursue a Technology Management bachelor's degree.

However, after taking an Automotive Service course as an elective, Lenhardt discovered a new interest. He decided to simultaneously attend EMU while continuing to take automotive classes at WCC.

In his final college semester, Lenhardt took 23 credits – 18 at EMU, five at WCC – to successfully complete both programs.

"(Transportation Technologies) started off as just something I enjoyed learning about and I justified doing it because I was gaining knowledge to be able to work on my own vehicles and to help friends and family. But at some point, I thought 'Shoot, I can make a career out of this.'

"I was doing pretty much every class in the program, so I kind of ended up with a second degree by accident."

Bonus: While enrolled at WCC, he could continue competing with the soccer team. With two seasons per academic year, Lenhardt was a six-time captain of the Wolfpack.

"Being a team captain forced me to learn to work with other people and learn how to lead in multiple different ways that will be impactful in my career," Lenhardt says.

So, after completing more than 90 credits and eight soccer seasons at WCC, Lenhardt's time on campus seems to have come to an end.

"I love WCC, but I kind of have to go into the real world at some point," he said with a laugh.

Of course, plenty of adults return to WCC to upskill in their current careers, so we're not saying "Goodbye" to Aiden just yet. Instead, "Good luck and farewell ... for now!" ●

TIERRA BANKS | SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY

Working as a phlebotomist at Michigan Medicine's University Hospital, Tierra Banks was exposed to multiple roles that seemed like a logical "next step" for her professional career.

Giving birth to her daughter, Theory, provided the impetus Banks needed to pursue one of them.

"I wanted to make sure I was able to do something that allowed me to provide for her better than a phlebotomist salary," Banks said, pulling her 3-year-old close. She considered nursing school, but instead opted for the Surgical Technology program at Washtenaw Community College.

After completing the 61-credit associate degree program, Banks has a new job as a Surgical Technologist at the same hospital she's been working at for five years.

"I love being in the operating room, it's my favorite environment in a hospital to be in," Banks said. "Being part of a surgical team really gives you a sense of being fulfilled by helping other people."

Banks continued to work her phlebotomy job - which comes with a 3:45 a.m.-to-11:45 a.m. shift - while taking classes and completing her clinical rotations. She said the classroom work was challenging, but that made her clinical experience easier.

"You hear so many horror stories of the OR because the instructors are trying to prepare you for every possible situation, but when you get there it's really a calm environment," Banks said. "Once your hands get bloody, it gets real, but you think back to what you learned in the classroom. You're so prepared that you actually get out there and you immediately love this work." ●

ANDREW DENTON | MECHATRONICS, FAME

Andrew Denton was a popular man around campus at the end of the academic year, representing the Class of 2025 as a student speaker at a pair of graduation-related events.

After attending both WCC and Eastern Michigan University nearly a decade earlier, Denton re-enrolled at WCC in 2023 thanks to the Michigan Reconnect scholarship. And he definitely capitalized on the opportunity.

Denton graduated with high honors (a 3.83 GPA) and not only earned a Mechatronics-Robotics & Automated Systems associate degree, but also completed three different certificate programs: Automation Specialist, Industrial Electronics Technology and Robotics Technology.

During Denton's time at WCC, the college introduced its partnership with the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education.

Known by its acronym, FAME is an apprenticeship program that matches advanced manufacturing students with local employers.

Denton was hired by Orbit
and completed the 18-month
associate degree from WCC

COURTNEY PRIELIPP | PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Courtney Prielipp started her WCC experience as a dual-enrolled Dexter High School student before earning a Presidential Honor Scholarship when ready to become a full-time member of the Wolfpack.

The high honor graduate (3.8+ GPA) of the Photographic Technology associate degree program, Prielipp added an Entrepreneurship certificate, stating today's working photographers "have to be a one-stop, all-tool shop, so having that business knowledge really helps."

Prielipp's preferred genre is photojournalism. To supplement her coursework, she became the photo editor of the student-run publ
enaw Voice, over the past aca
a pair of Michigan Communit
tion awards.

Those awards, along with a
ments, left her carrying a ha
after WCC's Honors Convocat

"I love WCC," Prielipp says
learn and develop."

Her time at WCC isn't over.
complete some transfer credi
pursuit of a bachelor's degree

SYDNEY O'C

It's not unusual for
two different associate
same time, but they're
fields.

That's not the case f
honors graduate earni
Arts and Welding Tech
programs may seem q
O'Connor finds them t

"What I really enjoy
tion to detail required
similar to what you ne
well together and it's a
to switch between the

O'Connor's WCC sto
home-schooled high s
Arts classes as elective
Two paintings chosen
Student Art Show earn
both the "President's
Choice Award."

MAYA LAINE | GRAPHIC DESIGN

Maya Laine has always been (pardon the pun) drawn to art. She even took a few art classes as electives while completing her bachelor's degree in Psychology, but never considered it to be a realistic career pursuit.

That changed when she peeked over the shoulder of a co-worker one afternoon.

During a break, the co-worker was fine-tuning a project she was creating for a Graphic Design class at Washtenaw Community College.

"She loved doing it, I saw how happy she was doing it, and she really recommended the program at WCC," says Laine. "That's what motivated me to come here and do the program. I found my passion."

Laine, a 2008 Ann Arbor Pioneer High School graduate, says the Graphic Design program at WCC taught her even more than she anticipated.

"I didn't realize how much illustration I would learn, and to be honest I was
do it," Laine said. "I thought t
more focused on font usage a
but the program really brings

"I was actually surprised wi
didn't know I had it in me."

An avid rock climber, Laine
into a clever product she prov
recent Digital Media Arts Stud

She cut retired rock climbin
them into keychains, which in
aging visits to her portfolio at
com.

An offshoot of her rock clim
outdoor adventure photograp
hopes to incorporate while pu
of working as a graphic design
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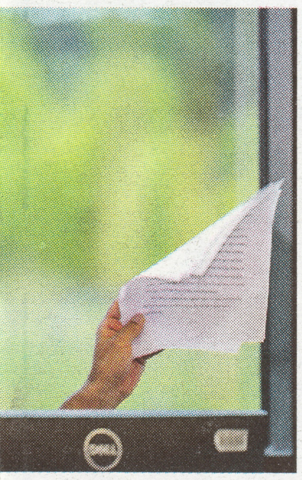
APPRENTICESHIP



tform Group in Jackson
a program that leads to an
and extensive on-the-job

training and mentoring at the worksite.

Denton is one of the first five WCC students to graduate from the FAME program and he was selected to be a student speaker at that ceremony … and addressed the crowd at the college's annual Honors Convocation two days later.

During Honors Convocation, he told fellow honors students and their guests that the FAME program was a sometimes grueling process that included classes that spanned a 13-hour window two days per week and three 10-hour work days.

"The reason I'm telling you all this isn't to complain, or to try and brag about my life, it's to illustrate a point," Denton said. "I spent a large part of my life just kind of coasting by. I didn't think I needed school. I didn't apply myself, and it got me nowhere. I had a decent life, but by no means did I feel I was where I was supposed to be going into my 30s.

"That's why I was able to sacrifice my social life and put my dreams of being a musician on hold, because I knew it was time to pivot and try something new." ●

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. "It's a great place to

She'll continue to
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The Dean's List

CONNOR | FINE ARTS, WELDING

WCC students to complete
e degree programs at the
e typically in closely related

or Sydney O'Connor, a high
ing associate degrees in Fine
nnology. Although those two
uite different to an outsider,
o be similar in many ways.
about welding is the atten-
," O'Connor says. "It's
ed for art. They work quite
an enjoyable change of pace
two."
ry begins as a dual-enrolled,
chool student taking Fine
es … and excelling in them.
for entry in the 2021 WCC
ned the Romulus resident
Choice Award" and "Dean's

Upon high school graduation, O'Connor received a full-ride scholarship to a four-year university and started work toward a graphic design degree. One of the courses offered in the university's art and design program was metal smithing. O'Connor was hooked on the idea of using metal to create art.

Remembering that WCC had a strong welding program, O'Connor transferred back to the college in 2023 and hit the welding lab to complete the unique combination of majors.

And O'Connor was flawless in both pursuits, never earning anything lower than an A in either program to graduate with a perfect 4.0 GPA.

The Phi Theta Kappa honor society member is primarily a painter, but dabbles in fiber art and wire wrapping. Up next is finding a workshop to start combining the two degrees into large-scale sculptures.

"I would love to do that as a career, make my own sculptures and just create art as much as I can," O'Connor says. ●

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kind of surprised I could
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out your creativity.
ith how creative I am, I

merged her passions
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mayalaine.myportfolio.

bing hobby has become
hy, something she
rsuing her dream job
ner for an outdoor gear

Washtenaw Community College
2025

BRYAN WILSON | NURSING

Like many students, Bryan Wilson came to WCC to find a second career. Unlike many students, he capped his time on campus by representing his graduating class as Commencement student speaker.

After high school, Wilson attended Heartland Baptist College in Oklahoma and earned a bachelor's degree in Pastoral Theology. He worked at a church in Seattle before finding a career in ministry work wasn't the right fit for him, so he moved back to Michigan for a fresh start.

Wilson's father, Marc Wilson, is a registered nurse who graduated from WCC and currently serves as a clinical instructor for our nursing program - so, Bryan did have a natural interest in healthcare, but he wasn't sure he had the stomach to handle bedside work. Considering healthcare administration a possible path, he took a job in medical records at a local hospital.

On his first day at that job, Wilson was taking a tour of the hospital when a patient collapsed. He watched in awe from the back of a room as a team of healthcare professionals rushed in and saved a life.

In that moment, Wilson saw his future … but he knew he wasn't going to be the one saving lives if he was working with medical records. So, he applied to the WCC nursing program the following week.

Wilson's life has changed significantly since that day. He married his wife, Elizabeth, shortly before starting nursing school and the couple welcomed their first child – their daughter, Lennie – just prior to his final semester.

Oh, and that final semester was a doozy! With a newborn baby at home, Wilson simultaneously wrapped up his WCC associate degree while working on a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing at Eastern Michigan University – completing 20 credits between the two institutions. ●

ANTHONY MARBURY | JAEDIN MARBURY
OCCUPATIONAL STUDIES | GENERAL STUDIES

Anthony Marbury started taking classes at WCC in 2012, first in Criminal Justice. Earning an associate degree was a goal that would ebb and flow, oftentimes being put on hold so he could focus on work and being a good father.

Ironically, it was his daughter, Jaedin, that provided the final push.

Jaedin Marbury enrolled at WCC to pursue a General Studies associate degree and encouraged Anthony to complete his final courses.

He switched to the Occupational Studies program – which allows students to build their own pathway of occupational/technical courses – and sat beside Jaedin during Commencement.

Later, the father-daughter duo walked across the stage one after the other to pick up their diplomas.

"That was the greatest thing. We were sitting there talking and laughing," Anthony said after the ceremony. "I never thought I would be walking across the stage with my daughter … it was kind of surreal." ●

HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENT

Tom Butman is WCC's ideal industry partner

By RICH REZLER
Director of Communications

Each year at Commencement, Washtenaw Community College honors an individual for extraordinary contributions to the advancement of the college and its mission.

This year's honoree was Tom Butman, general manager of Gene Butman Ford in Ypsilanti.

"The primary role of every community college is to help develop a strong workforce for the community that supports it," said WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca.

"Doing so effectively requires a working relationship with business leaders so the college can meet the needs of local industry."

For WCC, Butman is a prime example of the ideal employer partner, serving as a WCC industry advisory board member for the past 12 years.

This involvement creates a symbiotic relationship - he shares industry trends so WCC can ensure its curriculum is meeting workforce needs.

At the same time, it's ensuring the college is developing highly skilled employees to send into the job market ... including at Butman Ford.

Today, Butman Ford employs 10 WCC graduates in a variety of full-time roles - from service to sales to human resources.

The dealership also offers apprenticeships and part-time work for current WCC students.

Butman knows the value of WCC's programs because he has been part of one.

After earning a bachelor's degree in Automotive Marketing & Management from Northwood University in 2009, he enrolled in WCC's Automotive Services Technician program to gain a deeper understanding of every aspect of his family's business.

"It's that sort of passion for education and his industry that makes him an invaluable partner to WCC and our students," WCC Board of Trustees Chair Christina Fleming said while introducing Butman to the gathered crowd at Commencement. ●

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>
> **— Dr. Rose B. Bellanca**
> WCC President

PHOTO BY JD SCOTT

WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca (left) and WCC Board of Trustees Chair Christina Fleming (right) present Tom Butman with an Honorary Associate Degree in Community Service.

PAST RECIPIENTS

Tom Butman is the 12th recipient of an Honorary Associate Degree in Community Service from WCC. Previous honorees:

2012: John Dingell, U.S. Representative
2013: Michael A. Finney, CEO of Michigan Economic Development Corp.
2014: Gary M. Owen, State Representative
2015: Mary Dobson, Philanthropist
2016: Debbie Dingell, U.S. Representative
2017: Adam Zemke, State Representative
2018: George Waddles Jr., Pastor at Second Baptist Church in Ypsilanti
2019: Karl Covert, Dean of Washtenaw Technical Middle College
2020-2021: No traditional commencement
2022: Paul Krutko, President & CEO of Ann Arbor SPARK
2023: Richard J. Landau, J.D., Ph.D., longtime WCC Board of Trustee
2024: Sean Duval, Entrepreneur & Philanthropist

Washtenaw Community College

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HEADLINING KEYNOTE:

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FAME continues growth

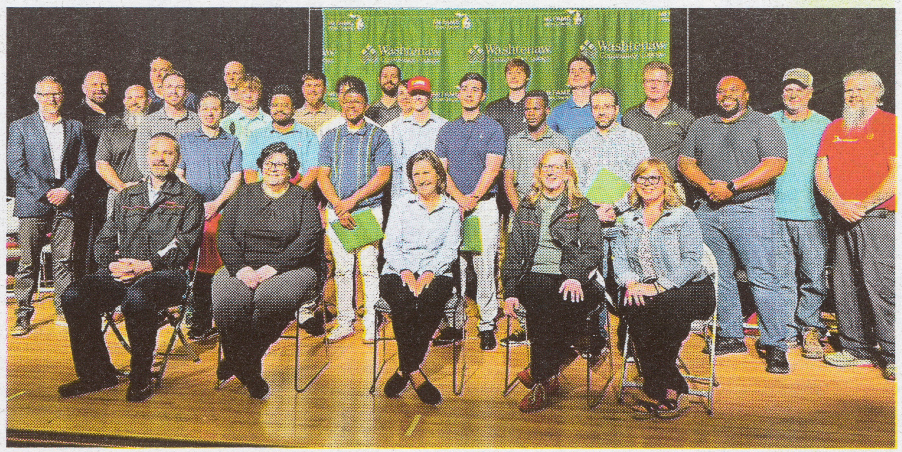


PHOTO BY LORI MOUTON

Fourteen new student apprentices are joined by their new employers during the recent Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education signing day. The apprentices will receive paid on-the-job training while simultaneously earning a Mechatronics degree from WCC.

2025 cohort is biggest yet for advanced manufacturing apprenticeship program

The Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) program continues to expand at Washtenaw Community College.

The next crop of 14 advanced manufacturing student apprentices participated in a recent "Signing Day," committing to a local employer for three days of paid on-the-job training while also taking classes two days per week while pursuing an associate degree in Mechatronics from WCC.

In May, the first five graduates of the 18-month program were honored and thanked for "being willing to pave the way for others and really help develop our chapter and improve our processes" by Meg Wallace, a senior engineer at Toyota and President of the FAME Mitten Chapter.

Another dozen student-apprentices joined the program in 2024.

WCC is the only Michigan college in the national FAME work-and-learn program, which equips students with skills required for the rapidly evolving manufacturing industry.

The Michigan FAME Mitten Chapter is administered by Ann Arbor SPARK, which manages fiscal and operational processes. Michigan Works! Southeast supports the recruitment efforts for both employers and students.

Workforce Intelligence Network (WIN) serves as the chapter's hub and supports funding to the Mitten chapter, which is provided as part of a $5.8 million Apprenticeship Building America grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Employment and Training Administration.

Members of this year's FAME cohort will be employed by Toyota; Sensitile; Orbitform; Novi Precision Products; Flexible Metal, Inc.; C&B Machinery; Moeller Aerospace; Kyocera; or Gudel.

Participants in the FAME program can be recent high school graduates, military members transitioning to the workforce, or individuals looking to move into a new career path. ●

THE WCC FOUNDATION

Attendees at the 2024 WCC Foundation Gala mingle before dinner. Proceeds from the annual event benefit WCC students through scholarships, emergency assistance and innovative programs that help break down barriers to education.

WCC Foundation Gala 2025

Annual celebration provides critical support for students

Ready to get a little fancy and have a great time while supporting Washtenaw Community College students?

We have just the event for you!

The WCC Foundation invites community members, alumni, local leaders and supporters to an unforgettable evening of celebration and purpose at the WCC Foundation Gala 2025.

The event will take place from 6–11 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 8, at the Morris Lawrence Building on the WCC campus.

Attendees are encouraged to dress in cocktail attire for this elegant affair — with a fun twist. Themed **"Opening Doors: The Journey to Unmasking Possibilities,"** this year's gala will take the form of a masquerade ball. Guests will receive masks upon arrival to help set the tone for a night filled with mystery, magic, and meaningful impact.

This year's gala also holds special significance as the WCC Foundation launches a yearlong celebration of its 40th anniversary — marking four decades of making higher education more affordable and accessible for thousands of students across Washtenaw County and beyond.

Guests of the Foundation Gala will enjoy a lively evening featuring delicious cuisine, entertainment, and the company of community changemakers, all united by a shared commitment to supporting student success.

Proceeds from the event benefit WCC students through scholarships, emergency assistance, and innovative programs that help break down barriers to education.

"Attending the Foundation Gala is more than just a night out — it's an opportunity to directly affect students' lives," said WCC Chief Philanthropy Officer Nikki Borges.

"Every ticket purchased and every sponsorship secured helps open doors for students who are working hard to achieve their dreams."

Individual tickets can be purchased at wccnet.edu/gala for $250, which includes dinner and access to the afterglow celebration.

Sponsorship opportunities are also available for organizations and individuals interested in supporting the event and receiving prominent recognition before and during the evening.

See a list of available sponsorship opportunities at wccnet.edu/gala or contact the Foundation directly (foundation@wccnet.edu, 734-973-3665) to discuss custom sponsorship packages.

WCC Foundation board welcomes new chair, 3 new members

Holly Heaviland, Ed.D., is the incoming Chair of the WCC Foundation Board of Directors, which also will include three new members.

Heaviland

Heaviland succeeds outgoing chair Bhushan Kulkarni and most recently served as Secretary and Vice-Chair.

Three new Board members are Chandra Arya, Eric C. Ferguson, M.D., and Paul Ajegba.

The WCC Foundation Board of Directors is comprised of volunteer community leaders who guide the work of the WCC Foundation.

The Foundation's mission is to support Washtenaw Community College and its students by making education affordable, accessible and impactful.

"The WCC Foundation plays a vital role in helping students pursue a college education," Heaviland said. "Under Bhushan's bold and thoughtful leadership, we expanded the number of student scholarships and deepened our contribution to student success. I thank him for his dedicated service and unwavering integrity in stewarding this important mission."

Heaviland is Executive Director of Community & School Partnerships at the Washtenaw Intermediate School District and is a board member at multiple local organizations, including the Washtenaw Area Council for Children and Washtenaw County Community Mental Health.

She is also an experienced psychologist with previous roles at Chelsea Public Schools and Williamson County (Tennessee) Schools.

Heaviland holds a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) from Michigan State University, an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) and a Master of Science (M.S.) from Miami University, as well as a Bachelor of Science from Central Michigan University.

Arya is a technology expert who previously served as an executive with the Ernst & Young consulting firm. He received a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Michigan and an M.S. in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Wayne State University. Arya is dedicated to empowering organizations through the use of the latest technologies to improve business performance, marketing and customer experience.

Dr. Ferguson is a physician at Huron Valley Radiology in Ypsilanti, with expertise in body and musculoskeletal imaging, and is also President of Advanced Imaging Alliance. He earned his Doctor of Medicine from the University of Michigan Medical School with distinction and also studied physics at U-M, graduating Summa Cum Laude.

Ajegba is Senior Vice President at Infrastructure Engineering, Inc. and Affiliates, an engineering firm with locations throughout the country. He leads planning for the firm's national corporate growth strategy and development of the strategic business plan. Ajegba worked for the Michigan Department of Transportation for more than 32 years and is an alumnus of the University of Michigan and Prairie View A&M.

GET BACK IN TOUCH WITH YOUR WCC!

Whether you earned a degree or certificate,
or just took a few classes, you are a WCC alum.

Join the WCC Alumni Association. Membership is **FREE**!

To see the benefits and to join the Association, visit **WCCNET.EDU/ALUMNI**

Washtenaw Community College | ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Prehistoric visitor takes flight at WCC

Some old fashioned teamwork results in a dramatic new display

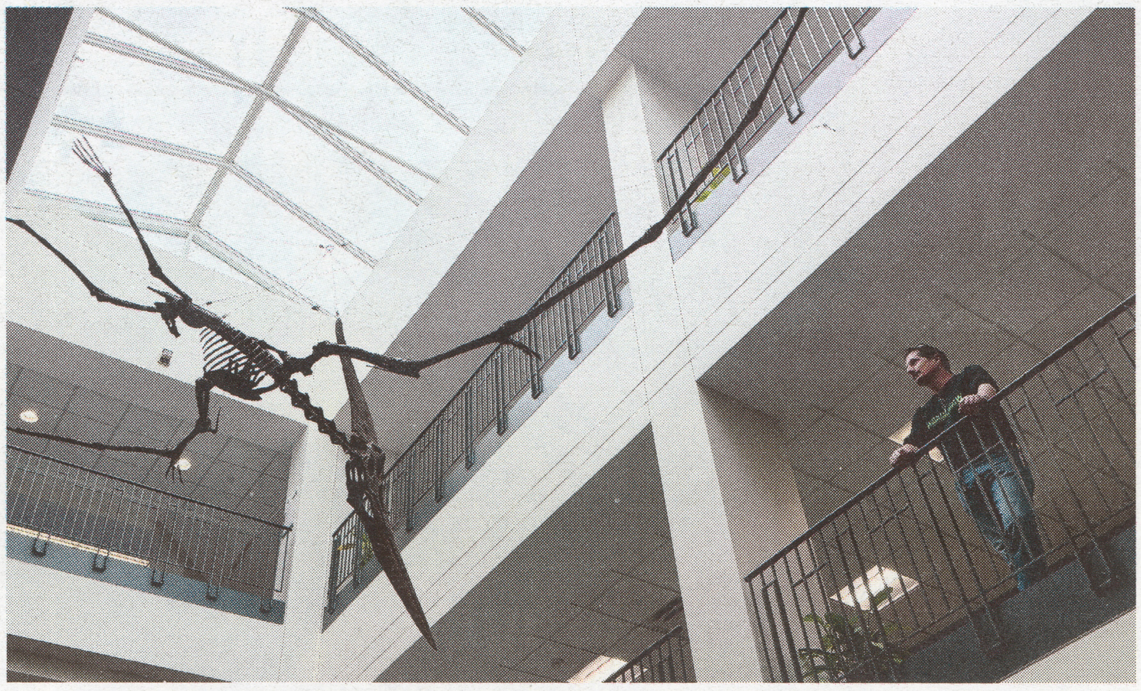


PHOTO BY THERESA HUNT

Transportation Technologies faculty member Shawn Deron gets an eye-to-eye look at the pteranodon that he 3D printed, assembled and painted. The life-size replica hangs in the atrium of the Crane Liberal Arts & Science Building.

Students entering the Crane Liberal Arts & Science Building this fall will be greeted by a spectacular new resident – a life-size, 20-foot wingspan replica of a pteranodon, now suspended mid-flight between the second and third floors of the building's atrium.

The dramatic display is the culmination of a cross-departmental collaboration sparked by a simple question: How can we make building artwork at Washtenaw Community College more exciting for students?

WCC's Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) had been working to update the building's art following a recent renovation. A beloved collection of dinosaur illustrations had been pulled from storage, but its outdated framing presented a challenge.

That's when inspiration struck.

Shawn Deron, a WCC Transportation Technologies faculty member with a fondness for 3D printing technology, had previously 3D-printed dinosaur bones for Biology faculty member David Wooten's labs.

The TLC mocked up an image of a flying pteranodon in the atrium and shared it with Deron – who was instantly on board.

Deron first created a scale model to confirm the project's feasibility, and then began printing, assembling and painting hundreds of parts to exact specifications.

Each bone was painstakingly glued and reinforced with copper tubing, then finished with realistic fossil textures.

Meanwhile, Wooten brought scientific authenticity.

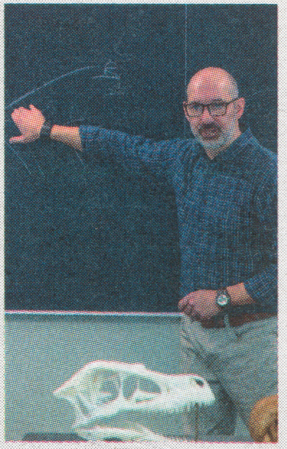
"The pteranodon was digitally scanned from a real fossil, so even the tiny cracks in the crest were preserved," Wooten said. "It's museum-quality – and students now get to walk right beneath it."

Roughly one month after Deron first started printing parts, a team gathered to complete the final installation. It took just over four hours to hang the prehistoric predator in its new home.

The goal was to make the building more interesting for students. For them to be excited to take science classes – to be immersed in what they're learning. What better way to do that than by flying a pteranodon right over their heads? ●

This is an excerpt of a longer story available at wccnet.edu/news.

What is a Pteranodon?



WCC Biology instructor David Wooten explains the pteranodon lived during the age of dinosaurs — about 85 million years ago — but were not dinosaurs themselves. The prehistoric reptiles went extinct around 66 million years ago, during a mass extinction caused by asteroid impact.

The pteranodon's wings were formed from a membrane stretching from an elongated fourth finger to its hind limbs, and it likely fed on fish, diving or skimming over the ocean.

WCC ESPORTS TEAMS RECOGNIZED FOR WINS

Washtenaw Community College recognized its two national championship Esports teams at its July Board of Trustees meeting. Pictured above alongside WCC Sports Manager Matt Lucas (far left) and WCC Esports Coordinator Max Kuznia (far right) are team members (from left) Quinn Campbell, Sawyer Clark, Chloe Johnson, Andrew Schmaltz and Matthew McKinney.

In its first year of eligibility, WCC Esports qualified for National Esports Collegiate Conference national tournaments in Counter Strike 2 and Overwatch 2; and both teams won their 16-team, single-elimination tournament. The Counter Strike 2 team defeated Southern Illinois University in the Division 3 championship match while the Overwatch 2 team beat Coe College for a Division 5 title.

Counter Strike 2 team members included Campbell, Clark, Johnson, Kush Erdenebat, Aiden Larsen and Munkhdul Khosbayar. Overwatch 2 team members included McKinney, Schmaltz, Chris Zachow, Nathan Fleck, Benjamin Bower and Casper Satwicz.

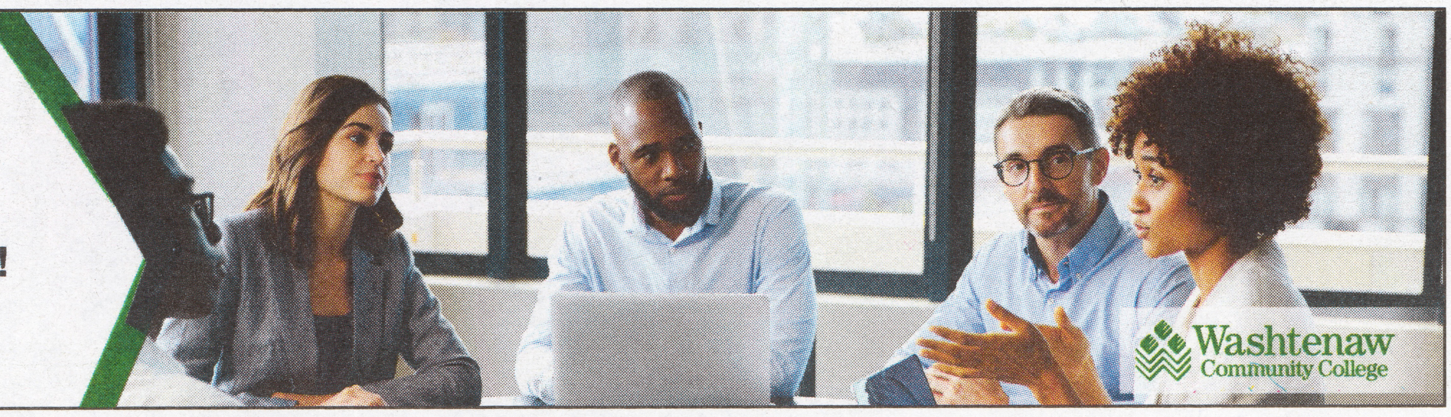
Since the college's new, state-of-the-art Esports Arena was opened in March 2023, the program has grown to eight competitive, co-ed club teams. ●

SUPPORTING STUDENT VETERANS

The Wadhams Veterans Center at Washtenaw Community College received a 2025 Education Innovator Award from the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. Above, WCC Manager of Military and Veteran Services Carol Osborne and Veteran Support Specialist Kayla Lugo accepted the award from MVAA Director Brian L. Love and MVAA Education Analyst Joe Saur.

The center was recognized for hosting the innovative Veterans Adventure League, a unique initiative that uses tabletop gaming to foster connection, promote mental wellness and deliver vital resources to veterans, service members and their families.

According to the MVAA: "By transforming a familiar activity into a platform for peer support and emotional resilience, the college has created a trusted, inclusive space where participants can build relationships and access life-saving support. This program exemplifies how creative, community-centered strategies can address some of the most urgent challenges facing the veteran population. WCC's commitment to veteran wellness and imaginative outreach serves as a powerful model for campuses across the country." ●



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